



Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office

Personnel Accounting Cooperation With Japan

As of April 18, 2006

Background

- Concerted efforts by US Graves Registrations services to search for the almost 54,000 missing from the Pacific and Chinese-Burma-India Theaters of Operation took place during and following WWII and lasted into the 1950s. JPAC continues to conduct WWII search and recovery efforts worldwide.
- The Government of Japan (GOJ), through its Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare (MHLW), conducts search and recovery operations throughout the Pacific Theater of Operations (PTO). The Japanese Defense Agency is only responsible for accounting efforts on Iwo Jima.
- JPAC has received several official Japanese delegations and has authorized individual members of the Japanese Defense Agency and police departments to study JPAC methodology.
- In late 2000, the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) began a dialogue with the MHLW through the First Secretary, Economic Section, Embassy of Japan, about establishing lines of communication on accounting efforts.
- Oct 2001, DPMO again contacted the Japanese Embassy to re-establish the contacts that lapsed earlier in the year. DPMO invited embassy representatives to begin discussions on the possibility of establishing a relationship between DPMO and the MHLW.
- Jan 2002, the Japanese responded favorably to DPMO's suggestion that we establish a relationship with the MHLW. MHLW sensitivities over cultural issues and recovery procedures were addressed.
- Feb 2002, DPMO representatives met with officials at the Japanese embassy to coordinate the following:
 - Exchange of schedule of operations in order to allow teams from one country to pursue leads that would be beneficial for the other country.
 - Exchange of archival information or information uncovered in on-going and future research efforts.
 - Exchange of scientific information to improve current search, recovery, and identification procedures.
- Mar 2002, DPMO representatives met with the First Secretary (Health and Welfare), Economic Section, Embassy of Japan, to discuss cooperation on issues related to Personnel Accounting.
- June 2002, a DPMO representative traveled to Japan and met with key members of the MHLW to establish a relationship and begin sharing information to protect the remains of US servicemen lost in WWII.
- October 2002, representatives from Japan's MHLW visited DPMO, AFDIL, and CILHI in an effort to gain greater understanding of each organization's roles and missions.

Recent Developments:

- June 2003, DPMO representatives met with key members of MHLW to discuss personnel accounting initiatives and further cooperation between the U.S. and Japanese governments. Both sides agreed to deconflict operational objectives during WW II recovery operations, and continue cooperation on personnel accounting issues related to losses from WW II.
- Former DASD Jerry D. Jennings led a small DPMO delegation to Tokyo from May 24-26, 2004. He met with Japanese government officials to discuss personnel accounting initiatives and established a strong working relationship with GOJ officials who play a key role in the extensive Japanese WWII remains recovery operations in the Asia/Pacific region. He also provided information that DPMO analysts gathered on the Battle of Iwo Jima to the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare (MHLW) that should assist their accounting efforts, and explored information sharing opportunities.
- On February 11, 2005, DPMO responded to a letter from the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare that requested additional information on Iwo Jima Battle conditions during World War II.

Next Steps

- Continue to keep an information exchange and dialogue open with MHLW action officers from the Government of Japan on the scope of US and Japanese personnel accounting efforts.
- Continue the process of educating Japanese Government officials on the US personnel accounting process and goals.

